**The Colonial Economy**

**THE INSIDE STORY**

***How did slavery affect the North?*** The economies of the southern colonies came to depend on the work done by enslaved Africans. They worked on the plantations of the South, growing tobacco, rice, and indigo. But slave labor was more widespread in the northern and middle colonies than most people realize. Enslaved Africans worked in homes, workshops, and farms in New England and throughout the middle colonies.

     In addition, New England ship captains were major players in the slave trade with West Africa. Even Quaker merchants in Philadelphia owned slaves, and some took part in the slave trade. The first poet of African American ancestry was Phillis Wheatley, who was kidnapped in Africa at age 7 and bought as a slave by a Boston family. Her exceptional talents made her famous, and she later gained her freedom.

     Enslaved workers in the North were a smaller percentage of the population than they were in the southern colonies. In New England the percentage was less than 5 percent, but it was higher in the middle colonies, where farms were larger. In the North, enslaved Africans more often lived in urban areas and worked as household servants or artisans. Some northern farms, however, were very large, with many African American workers. Most of the northern states began to abolish slavery gradually after the American Revolution, but in some places that process took many years.

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| **Slavery in the Northern Colonies** |

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| Portrait of Phillis Wheatley Credit: The Granger Collection, New York |

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| Phillis Wheatley was still enslaved when she published *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral.* |